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Several nonsense verses follow. The refrain is repeated with each verse.

The following is a plantation song from an old nurse : —

Way away, way away to the wild goose's nation,
All the niggers have to work on the sugar plantation;
Where it 's sometimes sweet and sometimes sour,
Every nigger has to work his own half hour.

Oh, the ladies they use the bergamot's spawn,¹
The nigger has a sweet scent the moment he 's born.
I play upon the banjo, I practise on the horn;
The music 's in the nigger Jim as soon as he was born.

Randolph Meikleham.

ALBEMARLE COUNTY, VA.

NOTE. — The first of the foregoing pieces may be a fragment of a song relating to magic, in which the person speaking is supposed to have been metamorphosed by a witch. — ED.

NOTES ON OLD NEW ENGLAND CUSTOMS. — In reading your articles on the manners and customs of former times, I am reminded of certain things which may perhaps be of interest to your readers.

Mrs. M. F. Hoagland.

200 WEST 52D ST., NEW YORK, N. Y.

1. KEEPING SATURDAY NIGHT. — Fifty years ago, and even at a later date, the good New Englanders kept Saturday night, taking the evening meal before sundown, and so having the work "done up." Just as the sun set behind the western hills, the household disposed itself to reading and quiet, but when Sunday evening came, and the sun had gone down, if there were young women in the family, their beaux came, a circumstance always causing the evening to be looked for with pleasant anticipation.

2. USE OF FENNEL IN CHURCH. — Last summer I visited a church where during my childhood a very tall man and a very small woman occupied the front pew, he leading the singing with unction, while she quietly chewed the fennel, now and then passing a sprig to a neighbor less fortunate than herself; perhaps in order to help them keep awake during the long prayer, which often consumed an hour, or the longer sermon, which frequently required two hours in delivery, more especially if the minister was expatiating on some doctrine. Most of the congregation had come long distances, and therefore waited through a short recess for the afternoon meeting, which gave the good dames an opportunity to sift the gossip of the neighborhood.

3. CHURCH CHOIRS. — These were an interesting feature, consisting of a great bass viol, with from fifteen to thirty singers. When such a choir sang "Before Jehovah's Awful Throne," there was awe and reverence among the worshippers, even although among the singers there might be a quarrel as to who should take the first seat.

4. STOVES IN MEETING. — During the winter, a very prominent object

¹ According to Webster's Dictionary, gardeners call underground roots *spawn*; the sweet-flag has a pungent, aromatic root.

was the foot-stove, on which the women rested their feet in order to keep them warm. It was no unusual thing to see a woman sit during service with her foot-stove in hand, and pass it to another at a distance of three or four seats. As stoves were not in use in churches, many amusing incidents happened at their introduction. In the history of the town of Litchfield, Conn., I find this record : —

“Opposition had been made to the introduction of a stove in the old meeting-house, and an attempt made in vain to induce the society to purchase one. Seven young men purchased a stove and requested permission to put it up in the meeting-house on trial. Consent was obtained. It was ready for use on the first Sunday in November. It being a warm, pleasant day, it was thought best not to light the fire.

“These young men were at the church early, as the historian records, ‘to see the fun.’ The stove stood in the middle aisle. People came in and stared. Deacon Trowbridge had been persuaded to give up his opposition. He shook his head, however, as he felt the warm air from the stove, and gathered up the skirts of his great-coat as he passed up the broad aisle to the deacon’s seat. Another old farmer scowled and muttered at the effect of the heat. One woman took her seat, and, after fanning herself, fainted entirely away. One good brother stood, and holding out his hands to warm them, rubbed them together to show how he enjoyed the heat. There was not, nor had there been, a fire in the stove; and when on Monday morning it was rumored that such was the fact, the opposers succumbed, and this was the means of reconciling the congregation to the use of a stove in church.”

5. SECOND-DAY WEDDING. — In Connecticut, and in New York, the bringing home of the bride was called a “Second-day Wedding;” in New Jersey, an “Infair.”

6. FUNERALS IN PENNSYLVANIA. — In Pennsylvania it was formerly the custom, when a death occurred, for men to be sent out in various directions within a circle of from fifteen or twenty miles radius, in order to “warn the people” to attend the funeral. Hundreds would often assemble, and the day was made one of feasting, many of the neighbors assisting the bereaved family to bake the meats, fry the sausages, and make the rusk and cake.

7. EPITAPHS. — An amusing feature of New England life in the early days was the epitaphs that were put upon the tombstones.

In an old burying-ground near Litchfield are found the following. I give the style as far as is possible : —

Mr James Tryon
Mrs Ruth 1st wife
of above

Mrs Patty second wife of above.

Stop my friends and take another view
The dust that moulders here
Was once alive like you.

Here lies our babes we once adore
They 've gone and cannot come no more,

Tw'as God that called them to depart
They was the darlings of our heart.

Beneath this stone lies children five
Endearing objects when alive
Though long in silence here the're lain
They certain will revive again.

This stone
is erected to the
Memory of Will-
iam Sey-mour
son of Capt Sam-
-uel Seymour &
Rebeker his
wife, who Depart-
-ed this life the 30^h day
of December — A. D.
1797 aged six.

Here lies the
Body of Mr Lew-
is Collens 3^d son
of Timothy
Collins Esq^o who
died July y^e 16th
A. D 1753 in y^e 24th
year of his age.

Having had 13 children
101 Grand children
274 Great Grand children
22 Great great grand children
410 Total.

BRIDE-STEALING IN NEW ENGLAND. — (See the paper of Mrs. Alice Morse Earle, "Old-Time Marriage Customs in New England," No. xxi., 1893, p. 97.) With reference to the article of Mrs. Earle, may be compared the poem of Mrs. Emma Willard, entitled "Bride-Stealing, a Tale of New England's Middle Age," read at Farmington in 1840, from which I subjoin extracts.

The historical poem followed the exercises of the day, which included another poem from the pen of the same authoress, entitled "Our Father," and an oration by Rev. Dr. Porter of New Milford, the occasion being the celebration of the Second Centennial Anniversary of Farmington, Conn.

Now all the wedding guests were met, . . .
Then cake went round and other matters,
Handed on well scoured pewter platters.
Well shone his whitest teeth on black,
The Ensign's negro, good old Jack.
Borrowed at need, the only waiter
Save Norton's Tom, who brought forth platter ;
Or what 's that lordly dish so rare
That glitters forth in splendors glare ?
" Tell us, Miss Norton, is it silver ?
Is it from China or Brazil — or " —
. . . Quoth the good dame, " 'T is a tin pan,
The first made in the colony,
The maker Pattison 's hard by —
From Ireland in the last ship o'er."
. . . Next skreaked the tuning violin.
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